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## GERMAN LITERATURE.

FRANCIS E. SANDBACH : The *Nibelungenlied* and *Gudrun* in England and America. London : David Nutt, 1903. 8vo., vi and 200 pp.

GEORGE HENRY NEEDLER : The *Nibelungenlied*. Translated into Rhymed English Verse in the Metre of the Original. New York : Henry Holt and Co., 1904. 8vo., xxxvi and 349 pp.

Although the interest in Middle High German literature has been increasing steadily during the last years in England and America, yet comparatively few contributions with regard to this subject exist from English and American scholars. All the more we appreciate the two above mentioned literary products which cannot help proving a valuable addition to the history and knowledge of the German mediæval National Epics.

In "The *Nibelungenlied* and *Gudrun* in England and America," Dr. Sandbach places on record, as quoted in the preface, "exactly what attention has been paid in England and America to the two great National Epics of Germany."

The two Epics are treated separately, that is, the *Nibelungenlied*, pp. 3-135, *Gudrun*, pp. 139-195. In each case, the writer arranges his material under five headings, namely : I. Introductory ; II. Translations ; III. Reprints of Old German Text ; IV. Miscellaneous ; V. Influence on English Literature.

The introductory sections contain good abstracts of the two poems, a clear representation of the historical and mythological elements, the latest theories with regard to them, and an extensive bibliography.

The reviews of English translations are rendered specially interesting and instructive by the addition of characteristic passages which furnish good samples of the style of treatment in each individual case. Seven translations of the *Nibelungenlied* and one of *Gudrun* are comprehensively discussed. After a careful examination of the four verse renderings by Mr. Lettsom, Miss Horton, Mr. Birch and Mr. Foster-Barham, Dr. Sandbach arrives at the conclusion that those of the two first named translators are the best. Neither of the three prose translations can claim to be an accurate, faultless version, although each

of them has its merits. Of the three English treatments of *Gudrun*, only one can, strictly speaking, be considered a translation, namely, the metrical rendering by Miss Nichols. Her translation is, on the whole, a good one, although not equal to that of the *Nibelungenlied* by Mr. Lettsom or Miss Horton.

Under heading IV, Dr. Sandbach mentions and in most cases briefly discusses ninety-three writings on the *Nibelungenlied* and forty-six on *Gudrun*. Here we certainly have a valuable contribution which will be useful for the study of Middle High German National Epics. Yet we can scarcely help thinking that the future historian and student would not have lost much, in case Dr. Sandbach had omitted in his lists a few books which do not bear exclusively on Middle High German poetry. Dr. Sandbach's whole book manifests a careful investigation of the subject, and will doubtless be of advantage to the students of Middle High German Epics in England and America.

Although a good many modern versions of the *Nibelungenlied* reproducing the metrical quality of the original strophe exist in *German*, it can hardly be maintained that the few English verse translations, that have appeared hitherto, represent the precise metre of the original. All the more we appreciate Professor Needler's translation, where the metre of the original is almost exactly rendered. The treatment is based on the St. Gall ms., which is, by most scholars of the present day, supposed to contain the best and most original text. A comprehensive introduction of 36 pages adds to the usefulness of the book.

Miss Horton's and Mr. Lettsom's English verse translations of the Epic, doubtless, deserve praise ; yet they are, as well as other English poetical renderings, defective in one very important respect, that is, the extra fourth accented syllable in the second half of the last line of the original strophe is not retained.

In Professor Needler's translation, we find the fundamental characteristics of the *Nibelungenstrophe* observed. We have the so-called "ringing cæsura" at the end of the first half of each line as in the original. Ordinarily, in MHG. metric, accented and unaccented syllables regu-

larly follow each other. The unaccented syllable may, however, be wanting, or 2, 3 unaccented ones may be together. These latter variations are not frequent in our present translation, although they do occur. On the whole, a regular change between accented and unaccented syllables is seen. In this respect, Prof. Needler's translation manifests the same principles which Hertz, who has not yet been surpassed, strictly observed in his translation into German of MHG. Epics. The German translator considered a regular change between "Hebung" and "Senkung" as most appropriate. In order to avoid monotony, Hertz omits, according to MHG. usage, the "Auftakt" occasionally, so that the verses show now iambic, now trochaic rhythm. He avoids, however, "damit das Lesen nicht erschwert werde," polysyllabic "Auftake," although they are not infrequent in MHG. poetry. Professor Needler not only produces trochaic besides iambic rhythm according to the original, but he also now and then gives polysyllabic Auftakte, thus adhering more closely to the original metre. Mr. Lettsom likewise has the change between accented and unaccented syllables. He at times omits the "Auftakt," so that trochaic besides iambic verses occur; also polysyllabic "Auftake" are occasionally found. As Miss Horton mentions in the preface, she uses "a measure familiar in ballad verse and much used by Macaulay in his well-known 'Lays' . . . for the sake of euphony, the extra accent which characterizes the second half of every fourth line has been omitted in the translation." Mr. Lettsom tells us in his preface: "I have not thought it expedient to make a rule of lengthening the fourth lines of the stanzas, though I have lengthened them occasionally."

As Prof. Needler mentions in his introduction, "the absence of the unaccented syllable between the second and the third accent of the last half of the fourth line of the Nibelungenstrophe is so frequent as to amount almost to a rule." Although the translator does not observe this characteristic as frequently as the original, yet he succeeds in reproducing it in a good many instances; cf. Str. 1290, 1292, 1303, 1770, 1813, 1871, 1925, etc. Another notable feature in which Needler surpasses previous translators of the *Nibelungenlied* into English verse, is a successful rendering

of the "Cæsurreim" in most cases where the original has it; cp. Cæsurreim in Str. 1. story: glory, greeting: meeting; Str. 170. mother: another, sorrow: borrow, etc. Neither Mr. Lettsom nor Miss Horton attempted to reproduce it.

As to the language used, it seems to us that also here Prof. Needler takes fewer liberties than previous translators, and hence renders the mediæval spirit, also in this respect, as far as possible.

The first Str. may serve as an illustration:

Uns ist in alten mæren      wonders vil geseit  
von heleden lobebæren      von grôzer arebeit:  
von freude unt hôchgezîten,      von weinen unde klagen,  
von küener recken strîten      muget ir nu wunder hoeren  
   sagen.

To us, in olden legends,      is many a marvel told  
Of praise-deserving heroes,      of labours manifold,  
Of weeping and of wailing,      of joy and festival;  
Of bold knight battling shall you      now hear a wondrous  
   tale.

(Miss Horton.)

In stories of our fathers      high marvels we are told  
Of champions well approved      in perils manifold.  
Of feasts and merry meetings      of weeping and of wail,  
And deeds of gallant daring      I'll tell you in my tale.

(Mr. Lettsom.)

To us in olden story      are wonders many told  
Of heroes rich in glory,      of trials manifold:  
Of joy and festive greeting,      of weeping and of woe,  
Of keenest warriors meeting,      shall ye now many a  
   wonder know.

(Prof. Needler.)

We trust Prof. Needler may find time and leisure to add to English literature an equally successful translation of the *Gudrun*.

KLARA HECHTENBERG COLLITZ.

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## SPANISH LITERATURE.

*La Vida es Sueño*, by D. PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA with notes and vocabulary by WILLIAM WISTAR COMFORT, Ph. D., Instructor in Romance Languages in Haverford College. New York: American Book Co., Pp. 180.

While the many Spanish texts published in the last few years have been, in greater part, selected from the prose works of writers of the xixth century,